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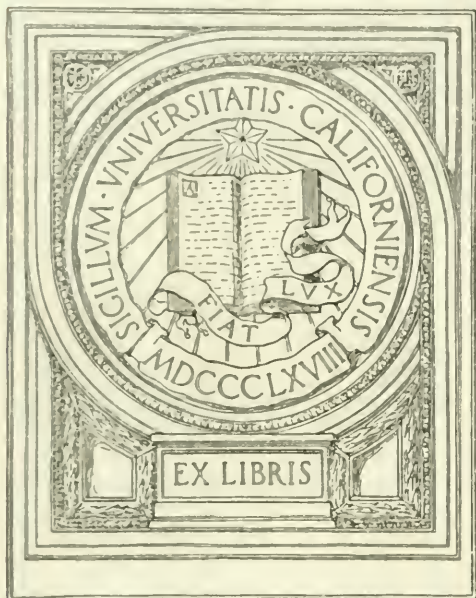


An Appeal to the President of the
United States for the Retention of
the Fleet and for an Adequate
Defense in the Pacific Ocean.

By

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ROBERT ERNEST COWAN

AN APPEAL

TO THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

FOR

The Retention of the Fleet

AND FOR AN

Adequate Defense

IN THE

Pacific Ocean



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
WASHINGTON.

Dec. 5 - 28 -

Dear Sir

My dear Mr. Wagoner: - I wish to thank you for sending me the yellow print in Acacia which I have read with great interest. I hope you will continue to draw the attention of our American to this great question so far as it with possibilities of April - You stated the case wildly as to the possibilities of invasion of the Pacific coast and the prime necessity of our co-operation in our outlying possessions - Bewalding's defense in our present document is

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, D. C., Nov. 21, 1908.

THE PRESIDENT,
White House, Washington.

My dear Mr. President:

1. Referring to the battleship fleet and its schedule to sail from Manila December 1st for the Atlantic, I have the honor as an American citizen and as a Member of Congress, to respectfully and earnestly urge you to reconsider your decision to withdraw the fleet from the Pacific.

I have delayed making this written appeal in the hope that the plans for the fleet's return would be modified before the time came for sailing, basing my hope on the march of events, the appeal of the Chambers of Commerce of the Pacific Coast, and the judgment, unanimous as far as I have been able to learn, of officers of the Army and Navy, including the members of the Joint Army and Navy Board, whose counsel I felt sure you would seek.

2. We are the one and only great nation in the world to-day that lives without a great standing army. Having no mobile land force ready to protect our coast fortifications from capture by attack from the rear by landing parties, our seacoasts, with their great cities and fabulous aggregates of wealth, are all exposed to raiding expeditions from across the ocean, except when, through the presence of a superior fleet, we hold control of the sea. This applies to both oceans. Furthermore, our coasts are so far separated that a fleet in one ocean can not give control of the sea in the other

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ocean, and the raiding of either coast could be accomplished by a well-prepared enemy long before a fleet could get around from the other ocean. Consequently, to live in security without a large standing army, we must have fleets in both oceans at the same time, capable of controlling the sea, in the Atlantic as against any nation of Europe, and in the Pacific as against any nation of Asia.

3. A fleet in full control of the sea is the most powerful deterrent to an aggressive nation contemplating war, while an inferior fleet has but little deterrent influence.

The return of the battleship fleet, leaving no protection in the Pacific, would still be far inadequate to give us control of the sea in the Atlantic, but remaining it can insure us, for some time to come, control of the sea in the Pacific. Its return would not be a great factor in the question of peace in the Atlantic, its remaining would be the paramount factor in the question of peace in the Pacific.

4. The Atlantic coast line is near the centers of population and thus has the greater accumulation of property exposed, but this nearness simplifies the question of ultimate defense, making it practically impossible for a nation of Europe in control of the sea to make a permanent invasion. The Pacific coast and outlying possessions have less property exposed, but are, nevertheless, integral parts of our domain, and are isolated, far away from the centers of population, absolutely dependent on our control of the sea for their protection. A nation of Asia in control of the sea could make a permanent occupation of our outlying possessions, including Alaska, and could make a long extended, if not permanent, invasion of the mainland. Therefore, as between

the two oceans, until we are able to control the sea in both, our main concern should be for the Pacific. We simply must not take chances in this ocean. To send the fleet away would be to take the gravest chances.

5. The docking and repairing facilities are better in the Atlantic. The difficulties and cost of maintaining the fleet in the Pacific would be greater, but the increase of cost would not be excessive and the difficulties would not be insurmountable. There would be, on the other hand, a decided advantage in keeping the fleet in the Pacific, in bringing about the sooner a proper and necessary development of our docking and repairing facilities in that ocean.

6. America has no part in European politics which border the Atlantic, but she is in the very vortex of Asiatic politics which border the Pacific. There is not within sight a single question to produce even a ripple of disturbance in our diplomatic channels of communication with the nations of Europe unless it be from their relations with nations of Asia, and in this case the best way to insure against disturbance in the direction of Europe is to provide against disturbance in Asia. On the other hand, in our relations with nations of Asia, we are confronted with the most difficult, most complex, and most dangerous questions known to diplomacy. The issue from these questions will depend chiefly upon our fleet and, in all probability, will be for us or against us, will be in peace or in war, according as our fleet, during the next few months and years is in the Pacific Ocean, or is on the other side of the world.

7. It is not discounting other problems to say that the greatest problems of mankind at this time are those grouped around the Pacific Ocean, where the

great races and civilizations of the white man and the yellow man are now meeting, nor is it depreciating the role of other nations to say that the principal part in meeting and solving these problems must fall to America. Some of the gravest of these problems are now clamoring for solution, whether the two races are to live together or are to remain each in its own habitat, whether they are to possess the Pacific Ocean jointly or whether one or the other is to gain supremacy; whether their meeting is to be confined to commerce or is to extend to war; whether China is to remain peaceful and industrial, a neutral market with an open door, or is to be dominated by Japan and become military.

The unrest in China, the dynastic succession, the revolutionary propaganda, the Japanese-Chinese relations in Korea and Manchuria, the Japanese-American relations in Manchuria and China and on the Pacific Coast—any of these questions might produce a crisis at any time, in which the integrity of the Chinese Empire, and with it the “Open Door Policy,” and vast American interests in which our peace and the general peace of the world would probably hinge upon the presence or absence of our fleet. There is no counterpart for such problems and such imminent dangers on the side of the Atlantic, and therefore there ought to be no hesitation between the two oceans, as to the disposition of the fleet.

8. The nations of Europe are of our own race and civilization. We understand them and know when danger approaches from their side. The nations of Asia, on the other hand, are of a different race and civilization. We do not understand them and can not tell when danger approaches from their side. Even Russia, astute, alert, on guard, never suspected the presence of danger till after a staggering blow had been

struck. This uncertainty of our ground alone should call for the constant presence of the fleet in the Pacific.

9. The European nations automatically group themselves to form a balance of power, keeping a mutual check upon each other, thus constituting a guarantee of peace. This balance of power in Europe has been America's chief security in the Atlantic, an irrational security, but one that has proved partially successful, being effective in proportion as the European nations are engrossed in European problems. At the present juncture all Europe is absorbed in the Balkan problems, consequently our security in the Atlantic is greater than usual.

In Asia, on the other hand, there is no balance of power, not a nation of Europe or of America having there permanently a single battleship. Japan stands alone unchecked, supreme in power, her fleet holding absolute control of the sea, with an organized army equipped and ready, of 1,500,000 trained soldiers, and with a merchant-marine of over 1,000,000 tons for transports and auxiliary service.

The uniform experience of mankind shows that constant danger to the world's peace lurks behind such an unbalanced condition of power even with nations the most advanced in social evolution. How could the world reasonably expect a continued peace in the Pacific if the unchecked power is left in the hands of a nation just emerged from feudalism, from 800 years of the "dark ages" of feudal strife that have left the people permeated with military chivalry and the exaltation of the profession of arms.

The Japanese people would not be human if they were not intoxicated by their signal victories in two foreign wars and their sudden elevation over night from the foot to the uppermost rung among the nations.

If the establishment of a balance of power has always been found necessary for peace in Europe, much more must it now be necessary for peace in Asia. The European nations have their hands full in maintaining the balance of power in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. The world can only look to America to establish and maintain the balance of power in the Pacific. This is the first great duty imposed upon America since taking the position of full-grown manhood among the nations. We can not escape this responsibility. Our own peace, as well as the peace of Asia and the peace of the world, are involved. The battleship fleet in the Pacific is the only means of maintaining this balance of power and thereby fulfilling our duty to the world.

10. The supreme duty, however, involved in keeping our fleet in the Pacific is the duty we owe to ourselves in the defense and security of our own territory, which now girdles this ocean, with the Aleutian Islands, Alaska, the West Coast of our mainland, Samoa, Guam, the Philippines, and holds its pivot with the Hawaiian Islands. This territory contains the great harbors whose permanent control will determine the question of supremacy in the Pacific. Americans know that with American control this territory would simply insure the Pacific Ocean and the markets of China on equal terms to all nations, and lay a basis for joint control of this ocean, in peace, between the white race and yellow race. But this would have to be demonstrated in actual experience. We can not expect Japan to believe this, particularly after our taking over the Philippine Islands, as we had to do, and our declining to share them with Japan. We can not blame Japan for desiring this territory and desiring through its possession to be supreme in the Pacific, and thereby in the

markets and politics of China, nor can we blame her for sending her citizens in advance to occupy the territory as far as practicable, and for completing, as she has done, all the preparations for the seizure of this territory as soon as opportunity permits. The only thing that stands in the way of the consummation of this seizure is the presence of our fleet—for, as pointed out above, without the fleet this territory is at her mercy. It is vain to think that the fleet on the other side of the world would be any defense. The existence of the fleet in the Atlantic can exercise no material effect deterrent or defensive. Japan being always ready, our Pacific coast could be raided from end to end by simultaneous expeditions, all our outlying possessions could be seized, and strong land forces could be thrown into Hawaii and the Philippine Islands, long before the fleet could get back to the Pacific, if it could get back at all in war time. Even if it got around it would be powerless to force a general engagement, powerless to relieve our possessions, powerless to operate effectively on the other side, having no base, and no army with which to seize a base, and no way to transport an army, even if we had one.

Of course, Japan realizes these conditions; of course, she also realizes the drift of events toward a greater American navy ultimately adequate for both oceans; of course she realizes that the completion of the Panama Canal will greatly reduce the time and the difficulty of transferring a fleet from the Atlantic to the Pacific and that she must strike before the canal is completed. To withdraw our fleet from the Pacific before the completion of the Panama Canal is to create for Japan the opportunity for which she is watching to possess herself of the Pacific Ocean practically without resistance

and almost without a tax upon her resources, and to place America, in an effort to regain possession, at a staggering disadvantage. To withdraw the fleet at this juncture is practically to insure war and to invite disaster. There is no claim from the Atlantic to offset this supreme demand from the Pacific.

11. Any doubt that might have been entertained on this grave conclusion is removed by the confirmation of recent events. The conditions pointed out above, Japanese supremacy in the Pacific and the absence of the American fleet, had not existed twelve months before Japan began to take notice of and to exaggerate every trifling incident affecting Japanese subjects on the Pacific Coast, straining at a gnat in San Francisco while swallowing a camel at Vancouver.

When the school question arose in San Francisco, a question recognized by all nations as coming under police regulation and pronounced by the Supreme Court of the United States as belonging exclusively to the jurisdiction of the individual States, the Japanese Government called on our Federal Government to interfere in the local affairs of the State of California.

Of course the Japanese Government knew that our Federal Government could not lawfully interfere. Of course it also knew that our Federal Government had always refused to interfere, though there had been 13 cases in our previous history where foreign subjects suffered violence within individual States, in 11 of which cases, including a case of the Japanese themselves, the foreign subjects were lynched by lawless mobs.

Only a great objective and the realization of possessing an overwhelming advantage in the event of war, could have led Japan or any other nation to make such a demand. Evidently it would never have been made if our fleet had been in the Pacific.

When our fleet leaves the Pacific the same objective will still be there and the same overwhelming advantage will again be placed against us. In which case we can only look for the same attitude from Japan, and for differences created through design or otherwise, in which we would again have to submit or accept a disastrous war.

As pointed out above, our Presidents heretofore have invariably refused to interfere in local matters, even when foreign subjects were being assassinated, but in this case, Mr. President, you did interfere where foreign subjects were not being harmed, not even being threatened with harm, but, on the contrary, were being given a free education, equal in every respect to the education provided for American children, only under regulations desired in San Francisco and not under regulations desired in Tokio. You interfered and called on the local authorities to recede from their decision, thereby surrendering the right of local self-government, the right for which Anglo-Saxons have died for a thousand years.

Only the gravest situation and the knowledge of our overwhelming disadvantage could have caused you to interfere thus. As a matter of fact, you represented, and Secretary Metcalf sent by you represented, to the School Board of San Francisco that there was imminent danger of war, and that the lack of the Panama Canal with the fleet in the Atlantic, made it necessary to recede. If you were justified then in calling on the people of San Francisco to surrender, you are not justified now in withdrawing the fleet and again placing them and their neighbors on the whole coast in precisely the same defenseless position.

12. Instead of invoking the armed forces of the United States to protect the State of California as re-

quired by Section 4, Article IV, of the Constitution, you threatened to use the armed forces of the United States against the Mayor and School Board of San Francisco, who were merely carrying out the provisions of the law of California.

You know, of course, that Japanese do not assimilate with our people and therefore should not be naturalized, yet you saw fit at that juncture to recommend the enactment of a law granting such naturalization.

Of course you appreciate your own countrymen as compared with all foreigners, yet you took occasion at that juncture to glorify the Japanese and denounce the Californians.

It could only have been a sense of our country's imminent danger at that juncture that could have caused you to do these things. By withdrawing the fleet you will lay the country open again to precisely the same danger.

You are aware of the fact that Japanese on the Pacific coast have applied officially for the suspension of law where they are concerned. I assume that you are aware of this fact, because the U. S. Ambassador to Japan joined the Japanese Consul-General at San Francisco and made a personal visit and personal appeal to the Mayor of that city to suspend, for the benefit of Japanese, the city laws regulating the sale of liquor, as a result of which five Japanese subjects are now selling liquor in that city without license in direct and open violation of the law forbidding the sale of liquor by aliens.

14. You know, of course, that race antagonism is inevitable where people of different colors are thrown together in large numbers as they are on the Pacific Coast. The influx of Chinese brought the Chinese exclusion act. The influx of the Japanese has produced

conditions that are fast paving the way for a Japanese exclusion act. Such an act would only be the exercise of sovereignty in our own territory, but the Japanese Government practically forbids it. Under these circumstances, to withdraw the fleet is to leave Congress subject to compulsion from a foreign power.

This race antagonism, as you know, is growing stronger and more acute every day. As you also know, it is beyond the control of the Government and could precipitate a crisis at any time without any warning.

The presence of the fleet has already had a salutary effect. Its absence would tend to aggravate the conditions for producing a crisis—would reduce the chances of a peaceful issue from a crisis, when produced, and would lead to disaster if the crisis resulted in war. This race antagonism, fraught with such grave dangers, has no counterpart in the Atlantic.

15. Assembling the separate conclusions arrived at above, the fleet should be retained in the Pacific Ocean for the following reasons:

1. Our navy is not large enough to insure the advantages that come from control of the sea in the Atlantic. It is large enough to insure them in the Pacific.

2. Permanent occupation of our territory by a hostile force from abroad is not possible in the Atlantic. It is possible in the Pacific.

3. America is not involved in the politics of Europe. She is very much involved in the politics of Asia.

4. World problems of the gravest nature depending largely upon America for solution are in an acute stage in the Pacific. They have no counterpart in the Atlantic.

5. We understand European nations and know when danger approaches in the Atlantic. We do not understand Asiatic nations and are liable to be struck without warning in the Pacific.

6. There is a balance of power in Europe, keeping the nations in check. There is no balance of power in Asia, and only America can keep Japan in check.

7. Supremacy in the Pacific Ocean is now at stake, carrying with it territory of great value, now defenseless in American possession, and the trade of China, already great and with boundless prospects. This supremacy is complicated by the unrest in Asia and the dangerous race problems on the Pacific Coast. The Atlantic presents no counterpart.

8. The San Francisco incidents show that our relations in the Pacific are at a dangerous stage. In these incidents and in the immigration question Japan has already thrown down a challenge to our laws, our institutions, and our sovereignty, and because of the absence of the fleet our Government for the first time in our history felt it necessary to back down. No such humiliation is possible from the Atlantic.

9. The four great historic causes of conflict between nations, desire for another's territory, competition for trade, antagonism of race, and conflict of institutions, are all operating in the Pacific. The forces involved are as unerring in their results as the physical laws of nature. Any one of these causes, unless counteracted, would be sure to result in war. The only effective counteractive is the presence of our fleet. All of these causes of war are in an acute form operating on a great military power, armed to the teeth, ready on land and sea, just emerging from feudalism, flushed with victory, and standing without check, unbalanced in half the world. The constant presence of our fleet

is the only chance on earth to maintain peace. These conditions have no counterpart in the Atlantic.

10. In the event of war with our fleet absent, we should be defenseless; disaster would be inevitable and we should find ourselves powerless to bring to bear our latent strength and resources. It would be flying into the face of nature and of Providence to take such chances.

16. In conclusion, in the absence of an international organization competent to maintain law and order between nations, the only safe defense in the Atlantic as in the Pacific, as long as we have no great standing army, is to have a fleet in constant and unquestioned control of the sea. With our coasts so far separated, this control can not be maintained by a fleet in the opposite ocean, even when the Panama Canal is completed. Until its completion, the influence in the opposite ocean should be regarded as nil. Therefore every effort should be bent toward hastening the day when our navy can meet the full requirements of our only rational defense, namely, control of the sea in both oceans at the same time. Until that day, it would be folly to divide the fleet and during this one fleet period the location of the fleet should be in the ocean where danger threatens. At the present time the Pacific is the danger ocean. There is no difference of opinion among thoughtful men as to this. In truth, the gravest dangers this nation has ever faced have gathered in this danger zone. The main duty of the fleet lies there and we should never entertain a thought of even temporary withdrawal until after the completion of the Panama Canal.

17. The objects of the American navy are to preserve honorable peace, as long as it can be preserved, and to win victory when war does come. In the At-

lantic the fleet would fail of both objects; in the Pacific it would come nearest to realizing both. The wise and true policy, in order to have our navy best fulfill the objects for which it exists, is to keep the fleet in the Pacific and to reinforce it there by sending out the armored vessels now in the Atlantic, and such other armored vessels as they are completed as would maintain the fleet constantly at a strength about one-third greater than the strength of the Japanese navy. This policy would establish the only foundation upon which to build a permanent peace and an abiding friendship with Japan, a peace that would permit the working out of the problems involved in the meeting of the yellow race and the white race without recourse to war.

We owe it to ourselves, in following the first law of nature, self-preservation, to adopt this policy. We owe it to Japan, we owe it to the world.

18. Believing, as I do, Mr. President, that the departure of the fleet from the Pacific would be a great national and international calamity, I am led by a sense of public duty to make this an open letter in the hope that others may join me, before it is too late, in making an effective appeal to your good judgment and your patriotism to rescind the order for the fleet's departure.

Very respectfully,

R. P. HOBSON.

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An appeal to the President of the United States for the retention of the fleet and for an adequate defense in the Pacific ocean.

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